

phase 1



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... EVEN I LIKE TO REST ONCE
IN A WHILE ...
GOOD LUCK, FELLA'S!



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PHASE ONE

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COVER

This embodiment of elegance is the titanic effort of chivalrous Kenny Barr and his mystical magical time traveling machine to illustrate a first-hand account of King Arthur and *Phasers Assembled* battling the brutish beasts of Beelzebub at the Gory Gates of Hell!

Reports have been flowing in that the limb-ripping Ken Barr was last seen in the murky depths of his native land, Scotland, wrestling with the Loch Ness Monster!

Well, Ken, best of luck in whatever endeavors you are undertaking and special thanks to you for doing this panoramic painting especially for *Phase One*.

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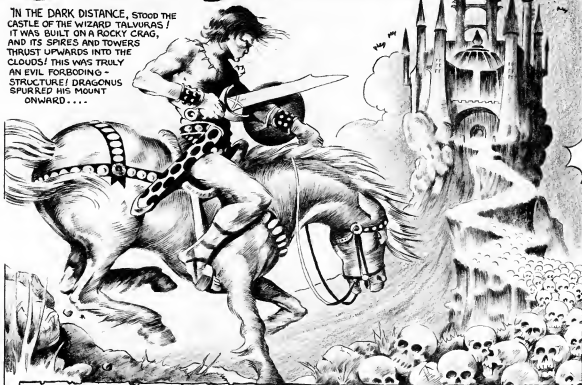
ON WITH THE SHOW!..



Benni
COWRIGHTSON
1970

SWORD OF DRAGONUS

IN THE DARK DISTANCE, STOOD THE CASTLE OF THE WIZARD TALVURAS! IT WAS BUILT ON A ROCKY CRAG, AND ITS SPIRES AND TOWERS THRUST UPWARDS INTO THE CLOUDS! THIS WAS TRULY AN EVIL FORBODING-STRUCTURE! DRAGONUS SPURRED HIS MOUNT ONWARD....



A FEW DAYS EARLIER, DRAGONUS HAD BEEN IN THE CHAMBER OF BALTHUS, THE ALBINO PRINCE OF ONE OF THE STYGIAN COLONIES! THE PALE ONE, IT SEEMED HAD DESIRED A BEAUTIFUL CREATURE NAMED ZAREEN FOR HIS BRIDE! BALTHUS RELATED TO DRAGONUS HOW HE HAD SENT HIS MINIONS TO ABDUCT THIS MAIDEN.....



BRUNNER '70

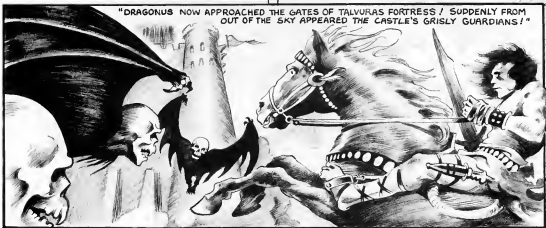
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...ONLY TO BE THWARTED! THE MAGICIAN TALVURAS HAD EYES FOR THE GIRL ALSO, AND HAD HER SPIRITED AWAY FROM THE VERY CLUTCHES OF THE ALBINO'S SERVITORS! "...NOW BALTHUS WOULD ENLIST DRAGONUS TO GET HER BACK! IF DRAGONUS COULD RETRIEVE HER AND KILL TALVURAS IN THE PROCESS, HE WOULD BE REWARDED ANY OF THE ALBINO'S -

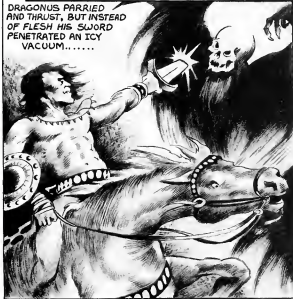
-COUNTLESS TREASURES!



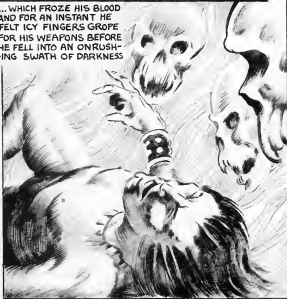
"DRAGONUS NOW APPROACHED THE GATES OF TALVURAS' FORTRESS! SUDDENLY FROM OUT OF THE SKY APPEARED THE CASTLE'S GRISLY GUARDIANS!"



DRAGONUS PARRIED AND THUST, BUT INSTEAD OF FLESH HIS SWORD PENETRATED AN ICY VACUUM.....



.... WHICH FROZE HIS BLOOD AND FOR AN INSTANT HE FELT ICY FINGERS GROPE FOR HIS WEAPONS BEFORE HE FELL INTO AN ONRUSHING SWATH OF DARKNESS



DAZEDLY, THE WARRIOR AWOKE, THE STENCH OF ROTTING FLESH ASSAILED HIS NOSTRILS, AND THE SIGHT OF HALF DECAYED BODIES HANGING IN SHACKLES OFFENDED HIS EYES! THIS WAS THE DUNGEON OF TALVURAS!!



ACROSS THE ROOM SAT THE FAT DUNGEON-KEEPER, TOSSING CRUMBS OF THE PRISONERS MEAL TO THE RATS, THE ONE CALLED THALD, SPAT WITH DISGUST WHILE DRAGONUS NOTICED THE PILE OF WEAPONS NEAR THE GUARD, AMONG THEM, HIS OWN UNMISTAKABLE BLADE, CARVED FROM THE FANG OF A DRAGON!



FEAR NOT! I AM ON
A MISSION, AS SOON
AS TALVURAS SENDS FOR
ME FOR QUESTIONING...



YOU SAY YOU ARE A
SORCERER! CAN YOU
MUSTER UP ENOUGH WILL
TO FETCH MY SWORD?

IT IS USELESS, LONG AGO I TRIED TO
DESTROY TALVURAS! THAT IS WHY I AM
HERE, HE HAS REMOVED ALL MY POWERS
AND IT WOULD STRAIN ME GREATLY TO
LIFT AN OBJECT WITH WHAT LITTLE WILL
IS LEFT ME!





YOU ONLY FATIGUE YOURSELF SORCERER! AND DEATH WILL COME THAT MUCH SOONER TO THE MAN WHO WASTES HIS ENERGY HACKING AT HIS CHAINS!

HAHA HA HA



IN BUT A MOMENT, THE MIRACULOUS BLADE WAS IN THE OLD ONE'S GRASP, MUCH TO THE JAILKEEPERS SHOCK!



...THE BLADE SLASHED THROUGH THALD'S CHAIN WITH A SINGLE EFFORTLESS STROKE! AND IN A SURGE OF GALVANIZED ACTION, THALD WAS UPON THE - FAT KEEPER!



HIS PLUMP FEATURES BUDGEONED INTO A BLOODY PULP! THE OBESE GUARD CRASHED TO THE FLOOR SCREAMING! THE HUGE RATS, DRAWN BY THE SCENT OF BLOOD SWARMED OVER THEIR FEEDER GREEDLY SAVORING THE LAST MEAL HE WOULD EVER OFFER THEM!!



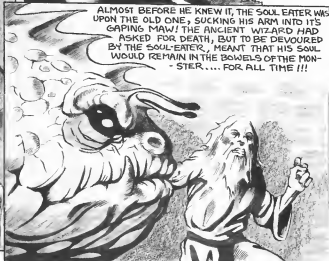
DRAGONUS WAS ARMED ONCE MORE WITH HIS IN-DESTRUCTIBLE SHIELD OF DRAGON SCALES, AND HIS INVINCIBLE DRAGON BLADE! THAD HAD UNCOVERED A WAR AXE !! BUT THE OLD ONE WAS ARMED ONLY WITH HIS MEAGER POWERS OF SORCERY LEFT HIM !, AND AN IRON RESOLVE THAT ANY FATE WAS BETTER THAN SPENDING ETERNITY IN HELL !!



FOOLS INDEED NOT TO EXPECT A TRAP! FROM THE TAPESTRIED ARCH WAY TO THE SIDE OF THE CHAMBER, LUMBERED THE MOST FEARED OF ALL TALVURAS' DEMONS....
..THE SOUL EATER!!



THEIR OWN FOOT FALLS ECHOING BEHIND THEM, THE TRIO CAME TO A CURTAINED ARCHWAY! DRAGONUS PARTED THE CURTAINS AND SWORE AS THEY FOUND THEMSELVES IN THE PRESENCE OF THE WICKED ONE!



THE DEMON HAD LOCKED ITS FANGS ON THE AGED ENCHANTER, AND ONLY ONE HOPE FOR HIM REMAINED AND THAT WAS A MORE MERCIFUL DEATH!

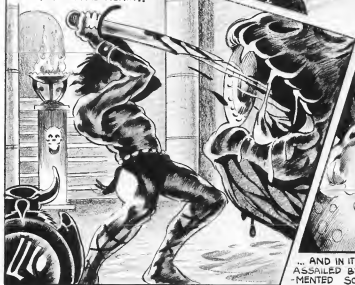


ROBBED OF ITS PREY, THE BEAST TURNED ON DRAGONUS!, FEARLESSLY THE DRAGON WARRIOR SURGED FORWARD!

...THE MONSTER IS TAKEN ABACK BY DRAGONUS' SUDDEN ONSLAUGHT! AND IN THAT BRIEF - MOMENT!...



WEDGING THE THING'S MOUTH OPEN WITH HIS SHIELD, THE WARRIOR SLASHED AND STABBED INTO THE DEPTHS OF THE MONSTEROUS MAW, AGAIN AND AGAIN!!



... AND IN ITS DEATH-THROES, DRAGONUS' EARS WERE ASSAILED BY THE DEMON WALLS OF A THOUSAND TORTURED SOULS SET FREE AT LONG LAST!.....

SHOCK AND FEAR HAD ETCHED ACROSS THE FEATURES OF TAL-VURAS, AS HE BEGAN A FORBIDDEN DEATH-CHANT THAT WOULD SUMMON HIS MASTER! NEVER HAD A MORTAL FOE SO DEIFIED HIM, HE WAS PREPARED TO PAY ANY PRICE FOR HIS TWISTED ALL CON-SUMING REVENGE!... FLAMES BELCHED FROM THE PIT, SMOKE BILLOWED UPWARDS AND THE DARK DEMON ROSE FROM THE DEEP!



WITH MORE COURAGE THAN WITS, THALD AIMED A TERRIFIC BLOW AT THE DEMON'S HEAVING CHEST AS IT TURNED !!



BUT TO THALD'S DISMAY THE MADDENING HEAT GENERATED BY THE FIERY GOD CAUSED HIS AXE TO BUCKLE AND MELT BEFORE IT COULD STRIKE..... AND THE WARRIOR WAS METED A SULTRY FATE!



DODGING A FLAMING ARM, DRAGONUS MOVED WITH CAT-LIKE QUICKNESS!, SPURRED ON BY THE SUDDEN LOSS OF HIS COMPANIONS!



DRAGONUS CHARGED TO THE VERY EDGE OF THE PIT, HIS MIGHTY-THEWED ARM PROPELLED THE BLADE WHICH COULD WITHSTAND THE VERY FIRES OF HELL, INTO THE HEART OF THE DARK DEMON!!.....



...MORTALLY WOUNDED, BEEZEBUB RECED-
ED INTO THE BLAZING, HEALING QUAGMIRE!
TALVURAS PREPARED THE ONLY DEFENSE
LEFT TO HIM!!



ARMED WITH AN UNFAMILIAR WEAPON!, TALVURAS CRINGED
LIKE A TRAPPED REPTILE!...



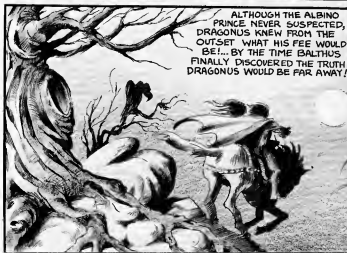
WARDING OFF A FEEBLE ATTEMPT AT SWORDPLAY, DRAGONUS METED
OUT THE WIZARDS OWN BRAND
OF JUSTICE!....



....AND CLAIMED HIS REWARD!!



ALTHOUGH THE ALBINO
PRINCE NEVER SUSPECTED,
DRAGONUS KNEW FROM THE
OUTSET WHAT HIS FEE WOULD
BE!... BY THE TIME BALTHUS
FINALLY DISCOVERED THE TRUTH
DRAGONUS WOULD BE FAR AWAY!



IMPACT

AH-ROGER, MISSION CONTROL... FINAL STAGE OPERATIVE, RETURNING NOW INTO THE INTREPID!

AH-THIS IS MISSION CONTROL... WELL DONE, INTREPID! BRING 'ER HOME, DANNY!

METEOR ENCOUNTER HEAVIER...

S-SOMETHING'S WRONG, CONTROL- METEORITE PATTERN VERY HEAVY AND THEY...THEY-

DANNY THIS IS MITCH- WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S GOING ON?

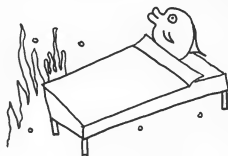
THE METEORS!
THEY'RE GIGANTIC!
HOW CAN THEY....
DWARF THE
INTREPID?!





PROLOGUE:

As I awoke one morning from uneasy dreams, I found myself transformed in my bed into a gigantic fish



I ran...that is, I SWAM to my window and discovered that the entire CAMPUS of the university where I am a student had become a huge AQUARIUM. I was somewhat chagrined, believe you me...



My room-mate had become a GRABFISH--

Lemme borra yer scale polish, will ya chum?--
Got me a wet date?
Gonna lay some EGGS
(glurble glurble)



Swimming outside, I met my GIRLFRIEND! She had become a NAGFISH!

Lissen sweetie, FORGET about studying seaweed arrangement!



Though her soft, undulating dorsal excited me as always, I firmed away in HORROR!



THE COMING OF THE PIRANAS

by Denny
and Steve

Nearby, I
came upon
a CHE FISH
addressing a school
of loyal
followers--

All power to
the SWIMMERS!

Right on!

Let's burndown
the establishment!

BURN--in an
AQUARIUM?

We'll
fake
it!

A couple of Jock Fish
were looking on
nictitatingly--

You an'me
gonna rip us
some of them
Red GILLS

Yea... them's
our bait!

Within moments, the water
was in TURMOIL as the
dissident schools clashed!



Within MINUTES, a blowfish was spouting on the tube...

These fish just move from one Aquarium to another and terrorize the schools! They're worse than the brownfins! They're the worst type we harbor!



That immediately sliced EVERYFISH'S Filet! Paddling back, I discovered that you CAN burn things down underwater... (Amazing, I call it!)



Well, I'll ADMIT it! I'm a CHICKEN Fish. I swam the hell OUT of there, to the far glass wall...



...and saw one of the KEEPERS with a cardboard carton in his chubby hands!

Glancing up an instant later, I observed him dumping a lot of very ODD fish from the carton...



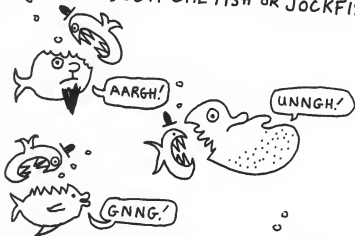
...odd INDEED, with their
gleaming
teeth



and their
expression
of cold-
blooded
MALICE

IT
WAS
TERRIBLE

Those new fish simply didn't CARE! They were hungry
for ANY sort of flesh, be it CHE FISH or JOCKFISH!



Blood wash[ed] into my gills, and
I felt like puking...

Listen, it was a Woeful scene...

... woeful...

our
hero



Bloated and putrefying,
The bodies floated to the
surface, where a grinning
cat waited....



There was only one
thing to do! I
went to the
PIRANA
ACADEMY.....



...got my
teeth fanged



...got
outfitted



...and now I'm as mean and vicious as the REST.

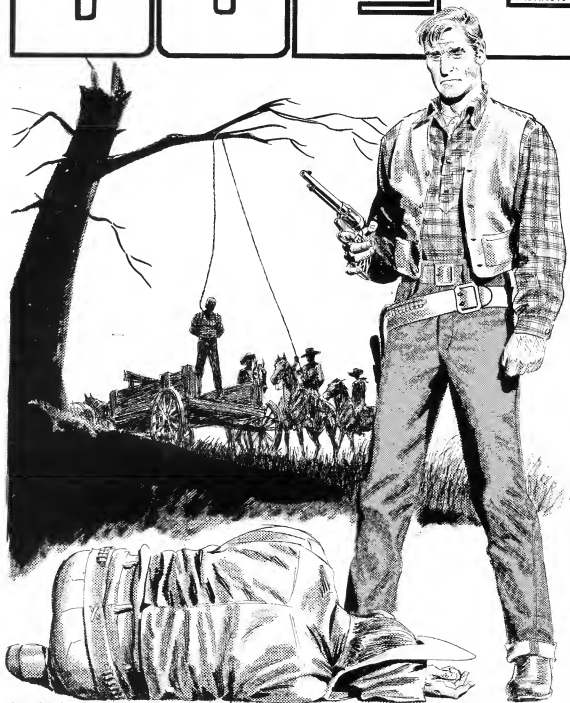
Listen, it's not exactly a HAPPY Aquarium -- but
it's sure as shit a SAFE one!



THE
END

DUEL

STORY~
GERARD
CONWAY
ART~
GRAY
MORROW



Dawn was still a few minutes away; to the east, the sky seemed stained, running with cloud streams of purple and gold. There was a faint hint of moisture in the July air, and as the morning lengthened, that hint became a full threat: it would rain before noon. Jud smiled at that thought, smiled out through the bars of his dusty cell back of the saloon. Rain would turn the dirt streets of the town to mud, making the funeral planned for later in the day a miserable chore. His funeral, Jud reminded himself. It still seemed unreal, as though the trial and the judge's sentence had been given to someone else—not to him, not to Jud Kurri. Nervously, he ran the palm of his hand over the three-day stubble he'd accumulated in the court; somehow it slammed him back into the reality of the scene, feeling that beard. It was real, it was part of him. It was something he'd soon never feel again.

Behind him, the cell door grated, squealed open on rusted hinges. The bulky form of the balding deputy moved sluggishly into the cell, a meaty hand clutching at the worn Colt at his side. Spitting out a wad of spittle, the deputy eyed Jud, who hadn't turned from the window, hadn't moved a muscle. The deputy spat again, hacking roughly, and said, "Get that ass movin', Kurri. Folks ain't gonna wait all day for you to get yourself ready. Come on, boy," he said huskily, and drew the Colt, and waved it

in a gesture towards the door. The sheriff stood outside, the shotgun cradled in the crook of his arm, his soft blue eyes watching Kurri like a rattler staring down a range-hare. "Move, Jud," he said softly. Kurri turned to look at him, smiling easily.

"Sure, Sheriff. Can't keep the hangman waiting, can we now?" He shrugged, straightened his shoulders, walked past the deputy slowly, tucking the tail of his plaid work-shirt in, snugging it down and pulling his belt tight as he passed into the saloon.

The bartender looked away when Jud glanced at him.

"Still spikin' em, Jake?" Jud asked, grinning. The fat man grunted something, continued to swab out the shot glass he was holding. Jud paused by the bar, leaned over it. "Did a real fine job on that last one, boy," he said, "a real fine job on settin' me up, didn't you?" The fat man said nothing. Suddenly Jud's hand lashed out, slapping the shot glass away from the bar rag, clutching up a handful of the bartender's shirt. "Didn't you?"

The shotgun barrel rammed Jud's side and the sheriff's hand clamped on his shoulder, drawing him back.

"Now, Jud—that was all settled at the

trial."

"Bullshit," Jud said, tugging away. "Bullshit, Sheriff."

"There ain't no more time for talkin' none," the deputy snarled, palming Jud's back, sending him towards the door. "You's gonna hang, so shut up and get those legs walking. Sorry, Sheriff," he added, dipping his head at the older man. "He just gets me all-fired mad, what with all that crazy talk'a his. Accusin' me and Ted, why that's not rightly good at all."

"Shut up, Frank," said the sheriff tiredly. "Let's go, Kurri. Let's get it over with."

"Sure, Sheriff. Sure. Real fine day for it, isn't it?" Jud eased the swinging doors open, stood for a moment in the grayish sunlight, looking down the length of the street, towards the town square, the crowd of people, and the tall, twisted tree with the hangman's noose dangling loosely from a low branch, waiting for something to tighten its knot. "A real, real fine day."

* * *

The old man in the black suit couldn't meet his eyes; he just sat in a corner of Jud's cell, reading quietly from the prayer book set between his knees, pausing now and then to study a word he couldn't quite make out in the fading sunlight. Tomorrow I'm dead, Jud thought, and nobody believes me, and nobody cares. He watched the priest sullenly, determined not to speak. He set on his bunk at the other end of the cell, his legs drawn up and his arms crossed over his knees, chin on forearms, watching the priest, watching the old man read.

"You don't really give a whoppin' shit, do you, Father?"

The priest looked up, blinking. A ray of red from the sunset touched his glasses, split and prisms.

"Son?"

"You don't really give one wet shit what happens to me tomorrow. You don't care if what they say is even true. You just sit there with your head buried like a goddamned schoolgirl, and—" Jud broke off, made a pushing motion away from his chest with his hands. They were handcuffed.



"Forget it, old man. Just keep readin' if it makes you happy." He closed his eyes, set his forehead on his arms, tried to drift off into the darkness.

"If you have something to say, son, please feel free to say it."

"Why bother? Trial's over. Nothing matters now."

"If it will give you peace, it matters."

Jud looked up, studied the old man. The shadows in the room had deepened quickly in the past few moments, but he could still make out the priest, his glasses glinting softly, his body hunched over slightly. He was staring at Jud, and that stare made Kurri feel uneasy, as though the meal he'd just eaten was backing up through the valves and passages of his stomach. Kurri swore to himself, shook his head.

"Ain't nothing'll give me peace but that coil of hemp, Father, and that's just gonna have to wait till tomorrow."

The priest must have noticed the tone, for he got to his feet, closing his book carefully, slipping it into the nook of his arm. He sighed, finally went to the cell door and called for the sheriff, not bothering to compound the futility of his visit with a half-hearted last blessing.

For a long time after the echo of the

closing cell door had silenced itself in his mind, Jud sat with his arms crossed over his legs, his head tucked down, his body straining with a tension that, as yet, had found no release.

The sound in the makeshift courtroom was deafening. Men were shouting, someone had started a fight in the rear of the room, and several women were crying out, their shrill voices adding a cut of hysteria to the general turmoil; Kurri sat with his hands pressed palm against ears, his eyes pressed tightly shut, his teeth clenched. He could feel the commotion, almost, vibrating up through the wood of the chair, up his butt and into his spine. It carried, almost echoing the rage within him. Kurri tried to calm himself, but found that he couldn't. He was breaking, all the fire that had been building these past two days drawing his gut as taut as a bowstring. His stomach churned, something went red just behind his eyes, and, scarcely aware he was moving, he suddenly threw himself backward, shrieking, kicking and slashing wildly with the cuffs still binding his hands. He felt something snap against the heel of his boot, something else go pulpy under his fist, someone grope for his collar, pulling at his shirt. Kurri slammed out blindly, screaming, tearing, kicking—until a shotgun stock took him across the back of the skull, flooring him. Before he lost consciousness, Kurri became vaguely aware of something wet running down the side of his face, dripping from a table



above him. It was beer. Something about beer in courtrooms nagged at him, faded, turned into a memory of a scene at the bar the courtroom had been the day before, faded again, dissolved, broke away into the emptiness of unconsciousness.

The shadows were moving around him again, breaking apart as shafts of moonlight filtered down through the roof and the slats of the attic. Kurri propped himself up with a hand, resting his weight on the back of the old wicker chair. One of the men in front of him went out of focus, the other crystallizing into a clear vision. It was the meaty one, the man called Frank; he was wavering, his right hand holding in the flow of blood running down the sleeve of his left arm. Kurri tried to cover both him and the other, felt himself stagger forward, steadied, blinking away the dust that'd gathered somehow in the corners of his eyes. His mouth tasted stale; he wondered where his drink had gone. It took a major effort to recollect, once more, that he'd left the bar half an hour before, was now standing in a low-ceilinged attic, facing off two men who'd befriended him on his return to the town. The closer one was moving his hand, Kurri could see, but he was moving it so *slowly*. Kurri tried to clear his head, brushing the back of his gun-hand across his forehead, letting the weight of the Colt draw it down over his eyes. Frank's partner was moving; he was going for his gun, as his friend Frank had done just the moment before. Kurri felt a weight drag at his side; then, as the bullet from Ted's gun tore through his vest and shirt, carving a slice from his side, the weight passed. He looked at his hand. His gun was firing, once, twice, a third time. Each shot echoed. There were many echoes. There was a scream, and the sound of a man falling. Jud wondered if he was the falling man, for suddenly his feet gave out, and he collapsed in a series of stumbling, jerking motions, feeling his knees strike the wood, then his elbows, and finally, painfully, his face. He blacked out. It was very cold.

* * *

His third drink. He felt it crawl up through his legs, up through the tenser muscles of his arms. It seemed to center in his stomach, just behind his belt. Jud un-notched the belt, readjusted it, glad with the full satisfaction of a man just well-fed. He smiled at the two men who'd settled themselves across from him. One had a tic that pulled his lower lip down



and away at random intervals; the other was steady-eyed, firm in a portly way. He'd introduced himself as Frank. Jud couldn't remember the other man's name.

"Just back, then?"

"Only an hour in, just over from the hotel."

"Sheet," said Frank's friend, scratching at the line of his jaw. "How much you make at it, all that time, hey? How much you figure you got?"

"Enough to keep me covered."

"Sheet," said the man with the tic, again. He shook his head, fingered his lip absently; the lip quivered and jumped, drawing down, jumping back. Jud watched it. He decided he didn't like the little man, or his friend, Frank. He was going to ask them to leave when the bartender came over and Frank ordered three more drinks.

"On me," he added, winking at Jud, grinning and reaching across to slap Kurri's shoulder. Jud shrugged, settled back in his chair to wait for the drink. One would be enough, out of politeness. He had to remember to be polite; there were a lot of things about associating with men again that he had to remember.

Three years. It'd been long, too long, and most of that time without another soul to talk to. Jud looked at the other two men again, this time less critically. He wanted to talk, after all, to brag a bit about the gold that he'd found. He supposed they weren't such bad customers, at that. Frank answered his slow smile with a reassuring spread of his own lips. "So tell me," Frank said good-naturedly, "all about how it is up there in the cold old north."

The sun was almost fully risen, now; it sat on the roofs of the small town, spreading out, turning from a brick red to a fiery gold. The storm clouds seemed to be drawing away, Jud saw, and this annoyed him slightly. He hitched at the belt of his pants, pulling them up again a bit, regretting once more that he hadn't resisted the urge to buy brand new store-clothes on his first day in town. Perhaps it all wouldn't have happened if he hadn't looked like such a duded-up hick. Perhaps. He brought his palm over his jaw again, feeling the growth of beard, letting it pull him back to the present. All those years in the wilderness, he'd never let himself go without a shave; he didn't know why, just a habit, he supposed. Yet three days in a cell had destroyed all those years. . . in more ways than just grooming. Jud blinked, looking up at the sky, deciding again that perhaps, just

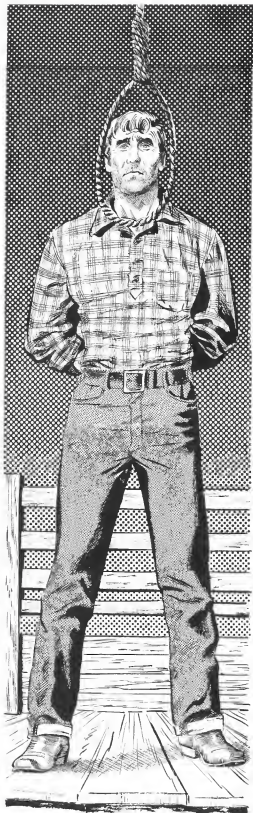
perhaps, there *would* be some rain.

There was a crowd gathered around the tree. Jud didn't recognize any of the faces. He wasn't particularly looking. He saw one set of familiar features, though; the pinched, drawn glare of Mrs. Leison, the wife of the man he'd killed. She made a movement towards him, but the young boy, a sullen-looking adolescent with straw-colored hair, held her back. Jud nodded at her, held up his manacled hands, gestured at the tree with a nod of his head. She looked away.

A thin man dressed in black that was somehow blacker than the clothes of the priest had been stood beside a farm wagon by the tree. He saw the sheriff's tall head over the heads of the rest of the crowd, moved quickly to the wagon's seat, clambering up with quick, spidery movements. Jud followed the sheriff's silent instructions, climbing up into the back of the wagon, standing straight, looking out over the crowd, looking but not looking. All he saw was the blur of the noose swinging a foot from his head. The deputy stayed by the foot of the tree, holding his Colt on Kurri while the sheriff got up beside him, unlocked the handcuffs, pulled Jud's hands around behind his back, did something that resulted in a muffled *click*. Jud felt a chill suddenly seed at the base of his spine, sending up stalks of ice through his back, buds sprouting at his shoulders and neck. He closed his eyes. He could feel the sheriff moving at his side, doing things with the noose, putting a hand on Jud's shoulder and guiding him over. Hemp touched Jud's cheek and it was pulled away. The noose settled over his shoulders, around his neck. Jud waited. The noose drew tight. He kept his eyes closed, sensed that the sheriff had left when the wagon floor moved up slightly against his feet. He felt completely dissociated from the world. He couldn't even get his hands up to feel the beard on his jaw, couldn't do even that. He waited, listening partly to the reading of the sentence, partly to the rustle of the tree's leaves overhead. The moisture was still in the air. Perhaps it would rain. Perhaps. . .

Someone called out. The wagon jolted under his feet, somewhere a horse neighed, snorting; then there was air around him, a momentary sensation of falling—

And something broke.



He struck the ground, felt his ankle give, the cuffs on his hands opening as he instinctively jerked his arms forward. Unlocked. There was a tremendous pressure around his throat. He was strangling, he knew, but that was somehow unimportant. He stood up, staggered a step, opened his eyes. The deputy was gaping at him, paralyzed with his Colt half-back into his holster. Jud, as though in a dream, saw his hand go out, striking Frank across the mouth, the other hand taking the gun from the meaty paw, aiming it. Fire thundered from its mouth. Smoke puffed out from Frank's chest, puffed out again from his neck as he fell away.

Jud turned, sought out the rotund figure of the bartender on the fringe of the staring crowd. The bloated red face was puckering in shock, and another pucker appeared beside the mouth as Jud fired a third time. This pucker bent inward, turned black; before it was fully visible, the fat man was whirling, falling away. Jud brought the gun up, aware again of the strain at his throat, felt himself stumble on his bad ankle, the gun going off into the ground in front of him. He pitched forward as the sheriff stepped up, fired both barrels into Jud's back. Everything inside Kurri seemed to explode out his chest; he sprawled, rolled over onto his side, saw the sheriff's dust-caked boot, the line of his leg, the sad, gentle smile on the old man's face, the sky overhead, filled with dark clouds, a touch of blue, and the beginning drizzle of a morning's washing rain.

His last thought was of the unlocked cuffs and the carefully frayed rope, his last emotion a sense of gratitude, his last sight a puddle of water, the dirt around it turning slowly into a mass of stubborn, unyielding mud. A trickle of wetness from his mouth mingled with that mud, turning it a shade darker towards black, and quietly, Jud Kurri died.

There were three funerals that afternoon, and each of them was slow; slow, slow and miserable. The worst of all was Jud's. The wagon bogged twice on its way to the hill.





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SEE! — Barbarians flinging their swords at nude women (the dopes)!

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SOUL FOOD

I CALLED HER MY ANGEL. SHE GRINNED AND SAID, "NO, A DEVIL!" IT WAS A CONVERSATIONAL PIECE OF NONSENSE BETWEEN US IN THOSE SPRINGTIME MONTHS OF OUR ROMANCE -- WAS IT ONLY A YEAR AGO? "A DEMON," SHE SAID, "AND I'VE COME TO GET YOU!" IT WAS MY TURN TO GRIN.

THE AIR WAS FRESH WITH NEW GREENERY AND MAY-TIME AND THE VERBAL GAMES WE PLAYED WERE FUN BECAUSE JUST BEING TOGETHER WAS FUN.

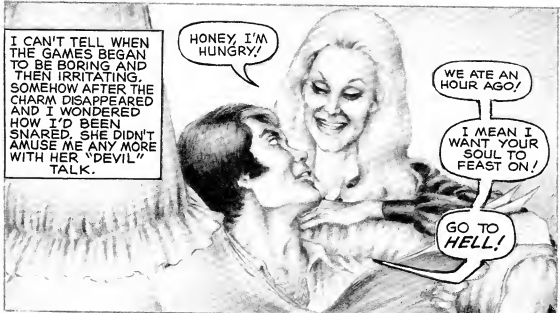
WHY THE HECK WOULD A DEMON WANT ME? OR SHOULD I SAY WHY THE HELL?

NOT YOU, YOUR SOUL! I WANT IT TO BE MINE!

SHE HAD IT, TOO. MY "SOUL" MY HEART, MY MIND -- I GAVE THEM WILLINGLY. SHE HAD THEM ALL, BUT SHE DIDN'T SEEM TO THINK SO.

ALL RIGHT!
ALL RIGHT!

NO, I HAVEN'T GOT YOUR SOUL YET. I'LL KNOW WHEN I, AND YOU'LL KNOW TOO.



I CAN'T TELL WHEN THE GAMES BEGAN TO BE BORING AND THEN IRRITATING. SOMEHOW AFTER THE CHARM DISAPPEARED AND I WONDERED HOW I'D BEEN SNARED. SHE DIDN'T AMUSE ME ANY MORE WITH HER "DEVIL" TALK.

HONEY, I'M HUNGRY!

WE ATE AN HOUR AGO!

I MEAN I WANT YOUR SOUL TO FEAST ON!

GO TO HELL!

MAYBE IT'S ME, MAYBE BEING FREE AND NOT TIED TO ANYONE MEANS TOO MUCH. BUT SOON I KNEW I HAD TO BE RID OF HER. I WOULD KILL HER...

I FOUND THE TIME, THE PLACE, AND THE COURAGE, ALL AT ONE TIME. WE WERE VACATIONING IN UPSTATE NEW YORK ON A PICNIC SPOT OVERLOOKING GRANITE-SIDED VALLEYS.

WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU! WILL YOU PLEASE OPEN YOUR MOUTH? I CAN'T **STAND** YOU ANY... UHH!

GO TO

HELL!

WILL YOU CUT THAT CRAP? I DON'T WANT TO HEAR YOU!

"JUST AS GHOULS DEVOUR BODIES, SO DO THE FIENDS AND DEMONS OF HELL DEVOUR SOULS. THE FEAST TAKES ALL ETERNITY ONCE THE SOUL IS OBTAINED BY LEADING A MORTAL INTO DEEP EVIL."



SHE WENT OVER THE EDGE TWO HUNDRED FEET TO THE BOTTOM. THERE WAS A WRENCH INSIDE ME AT WHAT I SAW! I DON'T DIG THAT EERIE, SUPERNATURAL CRAP, BUT I WAS TRANSFIXED! THE LAST SIGHT I HAD OF HER FACE SHOWED ME NOT **FEAR**, BUT **SATISFACTION!**



I SWEAR IT! AND SOMETHING—**SOMETHING**—WAS CLUTCHED IN HER HANDS, BLACK AND SHAPELESS AND **WRITHING**, ALTHOUGH SHE HAD BEEN HOLDING NOTHING AN INSTANT BEFORE! WHAT WAS IT? THAT "WRENCH" INSIDE ME—AND THE EMPTY FEELING THERE NOW—CRIED OUT! **WHAT WAS IT?**

END

COMES THE GRAY DAWN!

STORY: MARY WOLFMAN

ARTWORK: RICH
BUCKLER

"WOEFUL MORNING
YOU CRY, BLEAKNESS
TO MY SOUL."

"MY LIFE LOVE AND I
ARE GONE, AND
AGAIN WILL COME THE
SCAVENGERS IN THEIR
DUSK BORNE RAIDING
PARTY..."

"WHY DID YOU GO,
MY LIFE-LOVE?
ONCE WE WERE TWO..."

"...AND NOW I AM
ALONE, ONCE WE
HAD HAPPINESS
TOGETHER, AND
NOW ONLY
DISPAIR."

"WE
WERE
EACH
ALONE..."

"...THE TWO OF
US SO DIFFERENT...
CAUGHT HERE
AND FORCED TO
REMAIN APART..."

"...FROM
OTHERS OF
OUR KINDS,
BUT WE
FOUND
EACH
OTHER..."

"HOW DIFFERENT WE
FIRST WERE, AND HOW
MUCH THE SAME WE
SOON BECAME..."

"BUT THE SCAVENGER'S
CAME AND RIPPED A
HOLE IN OUR HAPPINESS..."



"THEY LEFT US ALONE,
MY LIFE-LOVE AND I--"

"OH, HOW I TRIED
TO STOP THEM, BUT
THEY WERE MANY,
AND I WAS WEAK."

"THEY CAME AND MY
LIFE LOVE FELL, AND
FEARS CAME RAINING
FROM EILLET'S."

"...ALONE FOR,
ME TO BURY
HER."

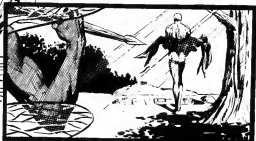
"OH, THE SUN WAS
SO STRONG THAT
DAY, BUT I
WORKED UNTIL
I NEARLY
DROPPED."

"AND I FOUGHT LIKE ONE WHO WAS
MAD, AND I DREW BLOOD ON
THIS PANET SO ALIEN TO MY OWN!"



"BUT STILL
MY LIFE-
LOVE
COULD NOT
REST IN
PEACE..."

"...FOR THEY
CAME TO FIGHT
ONCE MORE,
BUT THIS TIME
I FOUGHT AS IF
I WERE A KING."



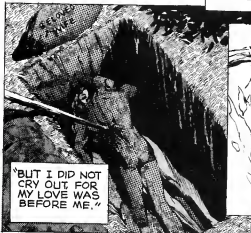
"STRANDED HERE, I LOVED AND LOST..."



"BUT I HAD MY REVENGE AND
KILLED THEM ALL THOSE SCAVENGERS
OF HELL. I FOUGHT AND THOUGHT I
WON, BUT ONE OTHER REMAINED--"

"--AND SLIT ME THROUGH
MY LIFE COVERING."

"WE ARE NO LONGER, MY LIFE-LOVE AND I, BUT PART
OF US REMAINS ALIVE...FREE TO ROAM THE WILDS..."



"BUT I DID NOT
CRY OUT FOR
MY LOVE WAS
BEFORE ME."

"TILL IT,
TOO, SHALL
FIND, ITS
LOVE."



"AND
UNTIL
IT
FORGETS
THE
SORROW
OF ITS
BIRTH."

HOME

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IT WAS LIKE NOTHING ELSE. TWO MEN GOING HOME AFTER 75,000 YEARS; BACK TO THE BIRTHPLACE OF THE HUMAN RACE. AND ON EARTH THEY WATCHED AND LISTENED. . .



MOTHER . . .

THAT'S GODDAM BIG.

THE NERVE LINK ENABLED THOSE BACK ON EARTH TO SEE AND TO HEAR WITH THE EYES AND EARS OF THE EXPLORERS. WE HAD KNOWN FOR A LONG TIME THAT SIRIUS WAS THE ORIGIN PLACE OF THE HUMAN RACE. WE HAD LEARNED ABOUT THE SEEDERS FROM RELICS FOUND IN THE SOLAR SYSTEM.

AND AT LEAST THREE-QUARTERS OF IT MUST HAVE BEEN SHEARED AWAY BY THE EXPLOSION.



WE HAD KNOWN THAT THE STAR COMPANION TO SIRIUS HAD RELATIVELY EARLY IN THE LIFE OF THE GALAXY PASSED CHANDRASEKHAR'S LIMIT AND BLOWN INTO A TYPE II SUPERNOVA COMPLETELY VAPORIZING THE ENTIRE SYSTEM. WE SUPPOSE THEY HAD FORSEEN THIS AND SEEDED THE NEARBY STARS. IT WASN'T UNTIL WE DISCOVERED THE PRINCIPLE OF THE REACTION MULTIPLE FROM A RELIC SHIP IN THE RINGS OF SATURN THAT WE COULD REACH OUT TO SIRIUS AND RETURN HOME.



THINK OF IT, TWO SUNRISES AND TWO SUNSETS, TWO SHADOWS-AND THE ECLIPSING OF TWO SUNS.

THIS WAS NOT AN EXPEDITION TO DISCOVER ANYTHING. IT WAS JUST AN EXPEDITION THAT HAD TO BE MADE. SO IT WAS. AND SOMETHING HAD TO BE LEFT BEHIND. SO IT WAS. A TRANSMITTER TO LISTEN, AND TO TRANSMIT. BUT GOD ONLY KNOWS WHAT FOR. IT JUST HAD TO BE DONE.

AND THEN RELATIVE MOTION AND COINCIDENCE PLAYED AN UNLUCKY MOVE AND A TINY METEOR RIPPED THROUGH THE TRANSMITTER AND THE LEG OF A SUIT.

I...UH...



THE TRANSMITTER . . . SMASHED.

I . . . I . . .



NEVER MIND THAT. I'VE GOT TO GET YOU
BACK TO THE SHIP.

NO, THERE'S NO TIME. THE TEAR IS TOO
LARGE FOR THE AUTO SEAL TO HANDLE.
MY AIR IS ALMOST GONE . . . LEG FROZEN.
PROP . . . PROP ME SO I FACE THE RISING
SUNS . . . I WILL . . . BE THE . . . NEW
TRANSMITTER . . .



ICICLES CREPT LIKE SPLINTERS UP THE
WARM FLESH —FREEZING. THE AIR: GONE.
HIS BODY PRESERVED NOW FOREVER. HIS
UNSEEING EYES STILL ORGANIC CAMERAS —
AND HIS EARS PERFECT MICROPHONES.



ON THE SINGLE PIECE OF DEBRIS LEFT
CIRCLING THE FIRST PLANET THERE IS A
PIECE OF EQUIPMENT, A VERY SOPHISTICATED
MACHINE WITH NO MOVING PARTS, LISTENING,
STARING ICILY TOWARD THE PLANET AND
THE DOUBLE STAR OF HOME WHICH RISES
ONCE AGAIN FOR MAN.



IT'S GOING TO BE A LONG TRIP HOME.



VETERAN

"IT'S OVER- I'M HEADING HOME!
AFTER THE HELL OF 'NAM, IT'LL
BE SWEET HEAVEN. GOD- NO MORE
NIGHTS IN A STINKING RICE PADDY
WAITING TO GET YOUR HEAD BLOWN
OFF! IT'S A **HOPELESS** WAR, BUT AT
LEAST I HELPED A FEW GUYS LIVE
THROUGH IT."

ILLUSTRATED BY
KEN BARR
STORY BY
KATHY BARR

"PINNED DOWN! THOSE DAMN
ROCKETS LIT US UP LIKE SPOT-
LIGHTS. MY BUDDIES... DYING...
AND WE COULDN'T EVEN GET
THEM OUT... AND SNIPERS...
PICKING US OFF LIKE PIGEONS!"

"THOSE POOR SLOBS SCARED
OUT OF THEIR MINDS- BUT
THE CHOPPER COULDN'T HOLD
ANY MORE ..."

**HEAD
FOR COVER!**
WE CAN'T
DO ANYMORE
NOW!
WE'LL HAVE
TO MAKE IT
THROUGH TILL
MORNING!

"JESUS- IT WAS TOUGH TRYING
TO GET TO THE RIVER. WE
HAD TO GET RID OF THE
SNIPERS FIRST AND A LOTTA
GUYS WERE BADLY HURT. I
FIGURED WE COULD HIDE
ALONG THE BANK TILL IT WAS
LIGHT ENOUGH TO SEE. WE
COULD FOLLOW THE RIVER
TILL WE HIT OUR LINES ..."





"I WAS **SCARED**—
BUT AT LEAST
WASN'T HURT LIKE
MOST OF THE GUYS.
WITH THE LIEUTENANT
DEAD, I FIGURED I'D
HAFTA DO WHAT I
COULD TO GET US
OUT OF THERE..."

DAWN—BRINGS A HORRIBLE REVELATION...



"THEY WERE ONLY A FEW—THEY MUST'VE
LOST SOME MEN. IF I COULD SLIP OUT
THERE BEFORE IT GETS TOO LIGHT, I
COULD LOB A GRENADE ON DECK..."



"THERE THEY WERE—JUST WAITING FOR
US. IF ANYBODY BREATHED HARD,
WE'D ALL BE DEAD. IT WAS GETTING
LIGHTER EVERY MINUTE. THEN I NOT-
ICED SOMETHING..."



OKAY,
BABY. DO
YOUR JOB.
JUST GIVE
ME TIME
TO SCRAM!



AAAAAGHHH!

WE SAW THE EXPLOSION--
FIGURED YOU GUYS WERE
AROUND HERE SOMEWHERE.
WE'LL DO WHAT WE CAN
FOR YOUR FRIEND. HE'S
HURT PRETTY BAD, THOUGH.

WE'RE
PROUD OF
YOU,
SON.

THERE'S
A MEDAL IN THIS
FOR YOU MBOY

WE'LL
PULL YOU
THROUGH
SON

CLAY'S
FALLS!

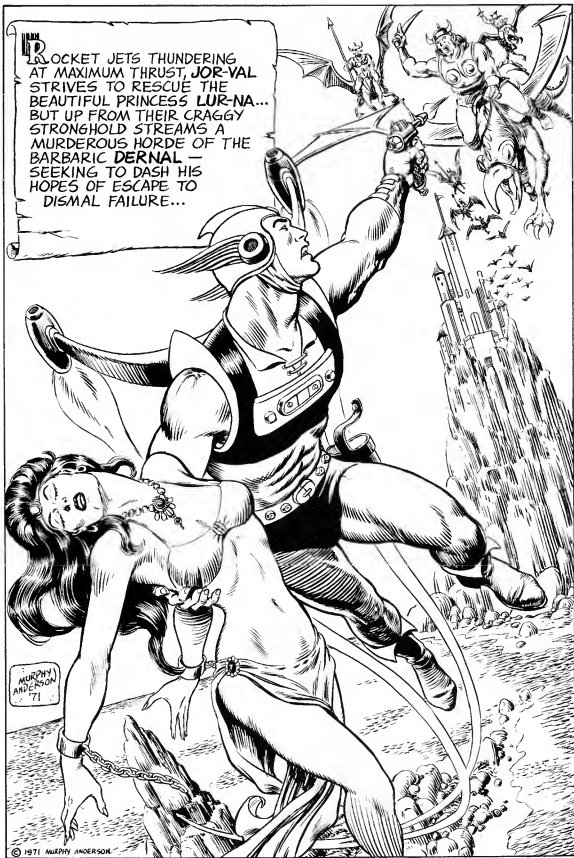
YOU'RE
HOME
HERO!

ROCKE

... SURE
GREAT TO
BE BACK ...



ROCKET JETS THUNDERING
AT MAXIMUM THRUST, JOR-VAL
STRIVES TO RESCUE THE
BEAUTIFUL PRINCESS LUR-NA...
BUT UP FROM THEIR CRAGGY
STRONGHOLD STREAMS A
MURDEROUS HORDE OF THE
BARBARIC DERNAL —
SEEKING TO DASH HIS
HOPES OF ESCAPE TO
DISMAL FAILURE...



MURPHY
ANDERSON
'71



bil maher.

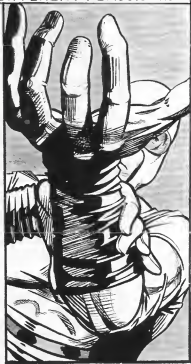
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I WONDER WHY I ALWAYS FEEL NERVOUS WHEN I GO TO OPEN THIS PANEL? IT'S A GOOD HIDING PLACE, REALLY. NOT THAT I NEED ONE SINCE I LET MOM IN ON MY ACTIVITIES AS

HERO!

ALWAYS FEELS GOOD TO GET BACK INTO MY WORK CLOTHES! I NEVER KNEW WHY SPIDERMAN AND ALL THOSE GUYS WEAR FLASHY COSTUMES WITH INSIGNIAS AND THINGS UNTIL I GAINED *MY* POWERS. WHEN YOU HAVE TO PROTECT YOUR TRUE IDENTITY LIKE WE DO, AN OUTFIT LIKE THIS MAKES YOU A DIFFERENT PERSON



YOU BE SURE TO SAY HELLO TO MR. AND MRS. MENDELSON FOR ME AND TELL HER WE'LL BE GLAD TO HAVE THE BRIDGE CLUB HERE THIS WEEK....

I CAN'T, MA! IT'S WENDELL'S PARTY! THEY WON'T BE HOME!



DAVID, DO YOU WANT ONE OF THESE NICE TRICK-OR-TREAT BAGS? LISTEN, I DON'T CARE WHAT WENDELL AND HIS GUESTS DO, BUT IF THEY START DRINKING, YOU COME HOME.

ACTUALLY, WE'RE GONNA HAVE AN ORGY, MOM. WE'RE ALL GETTING DRESSED UP SO UNDRRESSING WILL BE MORE FUN, SEE...





THERE'S SOMETHING MAGIC ABOUT HALLOWEEN. THAT TRYING SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS BECOMES A CERTAIN GRATITUDE IN YOUNG HEARTS WHEN, FOR A TIME, THEY GET TO BE ZORRO, OR TARZAN, OR BATGIRL, AND WE GET TO WATCH... AND WE GET TO REMEMBER OURSELVES. SOMETIMES IT SEEMS TOO BAD WE NEED AN EXCUSE LIKE OCTOBER THIRTY-FIRST TO BECOME OUR OWN **HEROES**.



NEIGHBORHOOD KIDS RUN GAILY DOOR TO DOOR, NOT NOTICING A STARK, SILENT FIGURE IN WHITE. AND WHY WOULD THEY? HIS COSTUME IS NOT SO OUT OF THE ORDINARY...

THIS NIGHT!

WOW! I'M GLAD I DIDN'T USE THOSE TIGHTS! IT MUST BE FREEZING OUT TONIGHT! I WONDER IF I'LL RUN INTO ANYONE I KNOW? HAH! I'LL BET ANY AMOUNT QUARTUCCIO IS GOING OUT AS A HOB0!

YET NONE OF THEM UNDERSTAND THE PERIL THAT HE AND INDEED ALL HUMANKIND MUST FACE TONIGHT IN THE SLITHERY FORM OF THE INVADERS....

DANGER!



ENVELOPING ME! SECONDS BEFORE
I BLACK OUT! GOT TO WORK INTO
THE WEAKEST SPOT AND PUSH...

VWAM!

MAGNIFICENT!

WE'VE FOUND EARTH'S CHAMPION.

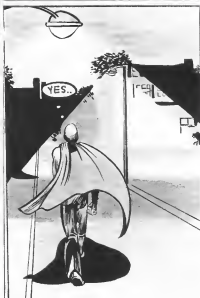
SO, YOU WANT
TO PLAY ROUGH,
EH, CHUM?

COME ALONG, ERIN, HE MIGHT BE
DANGEROUS! PROBABLY BEEN SMOK-
ING LSD OR SOME SUCH! JUST
REALLY FRIGHTENING!

WHAT A GRUN-
ION. I SUPPOSE HE'S
NEVER MESSED
AROUND AT ALL!

WHOOPS!

HEY! I MUST HAVE WALKED
INTO SOMEBODY'S GARAGE!
DAVE FEINMETZ! ETERNAL
BOY BRAIN-TRUST! WAKE UP!



I'D BETTER WHY ... HELLO! SO
WHO COPPED THE DOOR?

HEY SOMEBODY, PEOPLE!
I'M LOCKED IN! HEY!.....

HEY!

WAIT A MINUTE! I GET IT.
NOW! THIS WHOLE THING'S
A BIG SET-UP. OK, GANG, I
HAVEN'T GOT ALL NIGHT. I'M
PROBABLY LATE ALREADY.

AREN'T WE CLEVER. LET'S GET
IT OVER WITH. C'MON, WHAT'S IT
GONNA BE, EGGS? AMAZING!
WATER? MAYBE WATER!

WATER?

IT WILL BE PROVIDED. BUT IN THE MEAN-
TIME YOU HAD BEST SAVE YOUR STRENGTH,
WARRIOR. THE RETURN TRIP TO KALOAR WILL
BE OVER BEFORE YOU REALIZE IT!

what?

YOU ARE GOING TO DEFEND YOUR
PLANET'S HONOR AGAINST OUR FINEST.
WE WITNESSED YOUR BATTLE WITH
THE MANY-LEGGED CREATURE, AND
WHEN YOU VAPORIZED IT! YES, THIS
WILL PROVE A FINE SPECTACLE. OF
COURSE, THOUGH, YOU MUST LOSE!

NO DOUBT. I'VE NEVER
FOUGHT ANYTHING TOUGHER
THAN TOILET PAPER. ARE
YOU SURE THIS WON'T HURT
MY AMATEUR STANDING?

MAGNIFICENT! HA HA HA HA....

YOU MIGHT LEARN A LESSON FROM DAVID MOSES FEINMETZ.
HOW IMPOLITE IT IS TO BE LATE, IF ONLY BY A COUPLE
OF LIGHT YEARS. YOU MAY WELL ASK, HOW DID
THE KALORAN "SEE" DAVE'S IMAGINARY BATTLE?
HOW IS HE GOING TO FIGHT AN ALIEN GLADIATOR,
WHEN HIS MOM MAKES HIM WEAR WATERWINGS SO
HE'S SAFE DUNKING FOR APPLES? HOW AM I GOING
TO PULL THIS CRAZINESS INTO A FINISHED STORY?
WELL, YOU'LL KNOW AS SOON AS DAVE DOES, SO I
SUGGEST YOU KEEP YOUR EYES ON OUR

HERO!

NOW WAIT JUST A MINUTE....THIS IS CRAZY! YOU CAN'T TELL ME THAT I'M BEING KIDNAPPED BY A MINDREADING MARTIAN!

...BUT THIS IS ALL TOO REAL! TBE A DREAM! COULD SOMEONE OR SOMETHING HAVE SEEN MY IMAGINARY FUN AND THOUGHT I WAS A SUPER-HERO?



WHAT AM I SAYING! ALL THAT PROVES I MUST BE DREAMING!.. MAY AS WELL JUST ENJOY IT ALL TILL I WAKE UP!..HOPE I'M NOT SLEEPING THROUGH WENDELL'S PARTY!



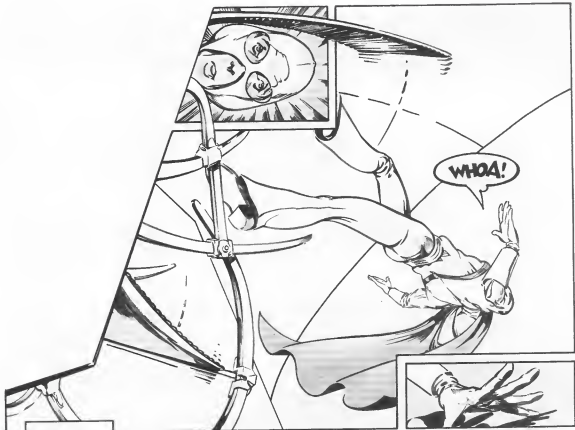
WHEEW! AM I GLAD I GOT MYSELF TOGETHER THERE!! I'D HAVE SWORN I WAS AWAKE AND WALKING DOWN MY STREET!



THIS IS A HECK OF A DREAM! THIS WINDOW IS COLD!



I KNEW I SHOULD'A MAILED MY CHRISTMAS CARDS EARLY THIS YEAR!



GOOD DAY, **HERO!** AND WELCOME,
TO THE **PEOPLE'S GRUDORIAL ARENA!**
IN A FEW MOMENTS YOU WILL TAKE
PART IN THE **SPECTACLE OF**
KALOAN SUPREMACY!





HOW'S OUR VISITOR DOING?

HE'S BEEN MARCHING AROUND IN THERE FOR YAHNS NOW. I'M BETTING HE DOESN'T EVEN MAKE THE MAIN EVENT...

SAY, I'M WARNING YOU, YOU CAN'T DO THIS TO ME, I'M A U.S. CITIZEN AN AMERICAN!



WHY MUST I WEAR THESE CURST EQUI-LIZERS? LET MY OPPONENT DO HIS WORST! I WILL CRUSH HIM WITH OR WITHOUT THESE YOKES TO BIND ME!!...



ALL IS PREPARED IN THE ARENA, WORLDMASTER...





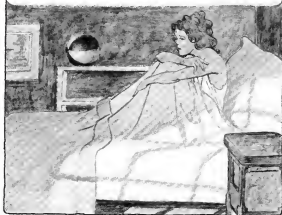
As Night Falls!!

"AS NIGHT FALLS"
IS A COLLECTION
OF SONG-CYCLES
INCLUDING:
'THE DREAM-SPINNER'
'WHISPERS'
AND THE CLASSIC
'MOONRISE'

HERE WE PRESENT
A
SELECTION FROM
'MOONRISE'
THE FIFTH SONG IN
THE CYCLE:
SALLY'S SONG

©1971 BY *MY* KALLITA

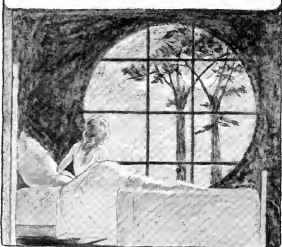
'T WAS JUST BY CHANCE THAT SUMMER'S
NIGHT
IN BED AWAKE I LAY,
BY EVERY RIGHT I SHOULD HAVE SLEPT
I'D HAD A BUSY DAY.



BUT JUST BY CHANCE I LAY AWAKE
INSIDE MY TINY ROOM,
AND GAZING THROUGH THE TREES
OUTSIDE
I SPIED THE CRECENT MOON...



FROM LYING ON MY BED I SPIED
MID-SUMMER'S CRECENT MOON.



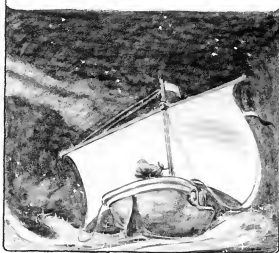
SO VERY SOFTLY THEN I ROSE
AND CREPT UP TO THE SILL,
I THOUGHT TO LOOK UPON THE MOON,
'TILL I HAD SEEN MY FILL.



THEN SUDDENLY BUT SILENTLY
ACROSS THAT HORNED MOON,
A SHIP WITH BRIGHTLY BELLIED SAILS
DROVE THROUGH THE ASTRAL SPUME.



AN ELVIN SHIP WITH PAINTED SAILS
SPANNED THAT STAR-SHOT WOMB.



AND THERE I SAW UPON THE DECK
A MAN BOTH LEAN AND TALL,
THE SPINNER IN HIS PURPLE CLOAK
WAS SPINNING DREAMS FOR ALL.



THE NEXT I KNEW THE MORNING
CAME,
I RAISED MY SLEEPY HEAD,
AND LOOKED AROUND IN
WONDERMENT
THE SUN WAS ROSY RED...



FOR ALL I COULD REMEMBER THEN
I'D NEVER LEFT MY BED.



Good Morning the POINT

At subtle Philosophical word & sorcery story

by Kenneth Smith

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"...My brothers - all of you who frequent this homogenized turf, hot under the fires of hell - I want you to know how little there was that I could do. I was not toying around with morality - I am as a demon ought to be, unmindful of good and indifferent to being evil. So it was not that. I was merely cultivating the vices that are proper to a demon, I was slothful and indolent and given to great lapses out of our subreality and *into*... something quite different. Call it a dream. But this dream seemed to be formed of those quaint and parochial values we mock as human. This dream was a *story*, and although the figures in it acted mostly out of malice, yet they still wanted some redemption. It was a *lesson*, this story, and it dreamed me, it carried me along, without my willing it. It shaped itself, it had a point, and yet - O forgive me, do not judge me as undemonic - the morality it taught was not human or demonic. The more I dreamed, however, the more futile seemed my demonic duties: the more I saw into human souls in this dream, the more *obtuse* I realized they were, and what then was the point of wasting torture and damnation on creatures who always *missed* the point and mistook the keenest torment for mere accident or bad fortune? Forgive me for my arrogance - but I began to feel, through this dream, that men had a *power* over demons that we could not understand. Something too deep, too black for our arts. Something... that as I slept... would exert itself upon me..."

Kenneth Smith
28 SEPT 1970



...Malthrusan ran his blade through the pool of rainwater. Blood had turned it muddy and milky with a rusty swirl that spread before his knifing sword. *God damn them*, he intoned, clenching his teeth against the bitter morning coldness that seemed to bite into his shoulder at the very spot where his blood throbbled out. *Cutthroats, vicious scumsucking pirates, I wish I had you alive to kill all over again.* He cursed the cruel fate that frustrated man with only one life in which to pay for his crimes; he cursed the pernicious irony of an existence that gave those who had the most to atone for, the least worthy lives to do it with. *Life is a cheat, nothing really balances out.*

At the edge of the city, behind ruins frosted with lichen and ice, these brigands had waited to ambush him and the pack-horses which bore his gear. The animals had fled uncontrolled and disappeared as Malthrusan went down from a cross-cutting slash of swords, and now the materials and food that were to have been his grubstake were lost. There was no point in returning to the city to beg for more — he had begged for months just to get these. How could he go back? How could he go on? He had nothing to fuel him now but bitter fury, a slow-burning desperation and a godlike vengeance against men and all their petty, destructive works — nothing that they ever got or did could be half as important as what they interfered with.

I'm not going back. If I find what I thought I would find, I'm keeping it. I'm staying there and living like a king or a god. Nobody believed me, but I saw the smoke one cold morning, the long, thin, constant smoke of machinery or a forge or a city, arising from the northwest plateau. It has to be the remains of the Founders' first city, the great engines and the metal skin of the ship they came here in. Someone else is using them; and if their heads are attached to their bodies by necks, then I and my little blade will do, we don't need the gear anyway. By afternoon he was scaling the cliff.

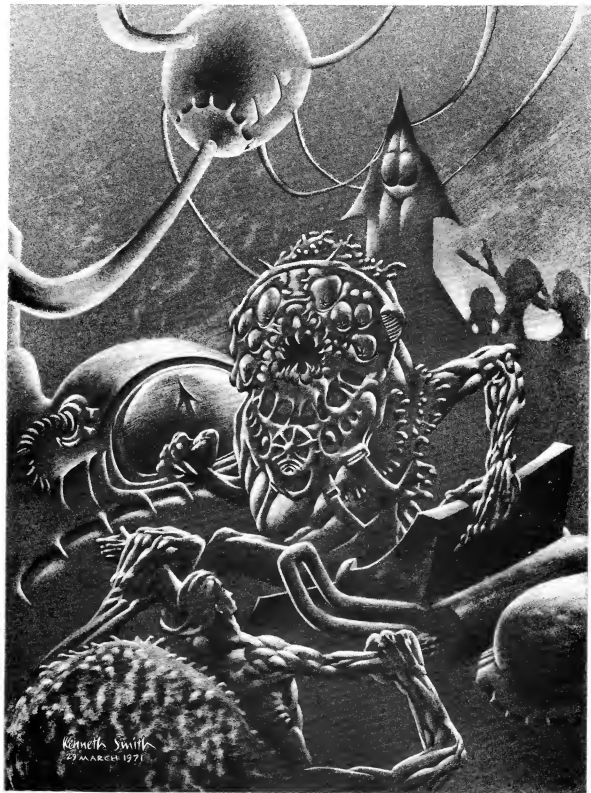
They'll see, of course, breathed Malthrusan as he eased around a particularly narrow section of ledge. Even the ones who came across when I asked for money, they too thought, "Well, Mal, it's always the same old story, isn't it? You were born a gambler, you'll die one, and just as other people had to pay for your little ventures, so too they'll have to pay for your big one, your life; somebody else will have to pay for your last mistake to

get you buried, and you won't need an epitaph because the whole meaning of your life will get summed up just in the way you die." Malthrusan's face winced involuntarily into a grimace, a toothy bitter grin that said all that needed to be said: *no, this time is it, the payoff, the big time.*

The heavy slap of leather wings caught his mind just as he was turning back to reality. Another tairo! The last one had taken his longsword away in its gut, and this time he had nothing for defense but a hunting knife. By the time he could use it, the beast would be too close, too

close. He didn't have maneuvering space on the ledge, he couldn't dodge — the first swipe of those lizard talons would get him for supper. The wind peeled his eyelids. The sheer wall at his back gave no purchase to his sweating grasp at it. Loose strata of little fractured rocks came away under his clawing left hand, and in the tension and high wind the rocks fell on the ledge with a tiny, a remote and microscopic sound. Malthrusan hardly noticed, as the great wings circled in a predatory arc, that the dripping and scattering of little rocks was masking another sound altogether, the scuttling of chitin along naked rock and the almost noiseless





Kenneth Smith
29 MARCH 1971

gesture of a power rifle being braced against the rock wall for kickback. Only the abrupt flash of white heat and the torn shriek of the great flying lizard turned Malthrusar's attention to his silent company on the ledge. The creature had to grab Malthrusar to hold him from falling, when an instant of shock and terror made the man's legs give way to the powerful winds that whipped around the two beings.

He was held by claws powerful enough to carry him if he should not follow. The inhuman creature gripping him in its piners hurried single-mindedly and with unbelievable agility along the ledge a little way, and then bowed and disappeared with him into a fissure in the cliff's strata. Deep inside the plateau were fantastic ranges of machinery, factories and laboratories and throbbing power plants along the periphery, all feeding lines and equipment to a monster rocket at the center of the cavern. Malthrusar was borne to what seemed to be a control room.

A great head, crusted with eyes and instruments, turned to them as they entered and impatiently demanded, "Yes?"

Malthrusar was astounded to bear the language of his people's sacraments. Are these our gods, our Founders?

His captor thrust Malthrusar forward. "This creature was seen ascending the southern face of our plateau. Even though it is so close now to the time, I thought he should be brought to you for disposition."

"We do not have time to recondition him and put him to work with his fellow captives. Perhaps...no, dispose of him." He turned back to the screen where he seemed to be supervising the preparation of the rocket. As Malthrusar was being carried away, the creature called out to his guard. "Wait, Mnassungim! I have a little idea. Bring him here. . . I see the expression on your face, human, and I know how to read it even though you do not know how to read mine. We have studied your people since we first brought them here. Our great ship crashed here fully a millennium before the generation-ship of your people passed close enough to this planet for us to attract it and force it to crash too. All your eons of civilization have been serving a purpose behind your back, you see: we made ourselves appear in dreams and hallucinations to your ancestors and sug-

gested great visions to them, inventions and values that we knew could have but one outcome — the construction of cities and energy-sources which, when the suitable time came, we could tap to bring our own massive engines into play once again. But let me make this point just a little more precisely, because there is scarcely any reason to play a joke on someone if you can't tell him about it: we follow the seismic indications of the power at the core of this planet, and we also follow the cycles of radiant energy generated by this system's sun, and we follow, as well, the comparatively trivial cycles of power-use within your people's cities. We know exactly when the most propitious conjunction of these cycles will occur, and then, using your people's energy-system as a conduit, we will arrange to have all these different forms of energy converted into a form which our ship can render kinetic. As you can imagine, the results will be cataclysmic for the conduit. But you have no reason to complain: that is, after all, what you were brought here for in the first place. Previously, of course, we would not have revealed any of this, but now it is too late for the revelation to make any difference. Until now, we have used the sanctions of your religious worship, instigated by ourselves, to make ourselves and our haven here sociologically invisible to you. Now, just for a little diversion in these last few hours of your people's existence, I wanted to tell you — to watch you, to see what you would try to do about it and how you would —" the creature seemed to laugh, "— live with the knowledge. Release him, Mnassungim."

"Now notice, my brothers," pleaded the demon as he interpreted the contents of his dream for them. "It is the first principle of these humans' religion that a being has the right to do as he likes with his own creations — their economy, religion, law and ethics all accept this notion of what is right. But in bringing the humans under their power and in causing the construction of their civilization, have not the aliens established themselves in the status of creators? Isn't the destruction of the lesser race right, even in its own eyes? Does a third party have the right to impose other standards, in spite of not being involved itself? I pose all these questions simply in order to make you feel the *viscous* state that good and evil have, in strictly *human* terms — the slippage, the plastic and malleable way that 'the right' appears to humans."

Malthrusar's mind and body were

never further apart. His feelings were the captive of an immediate physical fear as he tried to avoid losing his footage and being cast off the ledge by the wind; but in his mind, abstract thoughts caught his conscience and flung it this way and that. He was near to the ground now, but no closer to a decision as to what he should do: no one would believe him, in the first place, and certainly the aliens counted on that. But what should he do, in the light of that fact? They would disbelieve him *because* he was Malthrusar, most of them, and because he was known as one who exaggerates and is given to sensationalism. Well, the hell with them! was his first reaction. Let them go up in flames, it serves them right for being so goddamned stupid.

"I have to call your attention, again, to equivocal values that inform this decision of the man," said the demon. "Obviously there is no general theory of stupidity extant among his people. It is variously felt that stupidity is the result of nature and that it is the result of free will. In the first case, the man's decision would be just only in the sense that it would be naturally fitting, that is, those who will suffer have themselves necessitated this outcome, albeit not willingly. In the second case, the same thing is true but there is an element of perversity which gives a different cast to the judgment — the sufferers, the stupid ones, do not *want*, in some sense, to avoid the results of their stupidity. Again, I say all these things to you, my jury, because I want to impress upon you the point that, among humans, 'getting the point' is not as simple or as direct as it may seem, because every issue appears to have at least *two* points and can be taken as the individual mind prefers." The little demon shifted from one foot to the other; it would not be long now.

Malthrusar's mind rambled on, following a logic of its own. But that *cannot* happen, he thought to himself: if the stupid are allowed to die in their stupidity and *because* of their stupidity, no one will ever know how right he was about the momentous discovery he had claimed he would make. It is better that they know, even if it deprives their last hours of any peace. Better that they should suffer and understand why than that they should simply suffer.

"Note," interjected the little demon, "that although the man has decided to make a decision in behalf of his fellows' good, he himself is motivated to make it

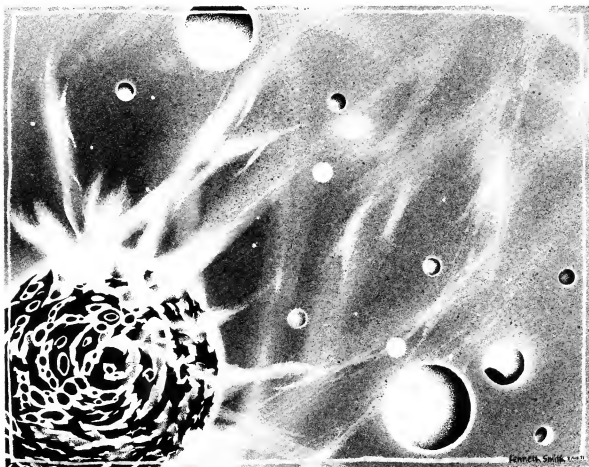
out of his own vanity. Such is the tangle of good and evil among men. On the other hand, he is also willing to sacrifice their pleasure and peace of mind in behalf of their 'dignity' and 'nobility' — is this a good decision for them, or is it a hard and godlike decision that is requiring them to be something more than the human beings that they are?" The demon felt he was getting across to his jury. He attempted a brief summation. "Curiously, when we put all this in perspective, we see that the man, in spite of equivocation and indecision, does either good or evil in a *direct* sense, for its own sake and as an end in itself; whereas the aliens do evil incidentally and out of indifference, in the course of doing something benevolent for themselves."

Malthusar was beginning to feel watched. He wondered what the aliens were thinking, whether they knew why he was now hurrying toward the city and why he was going to sabotage its power plant in an apparently arbitrary way. He

wondered if they would see through the surface irrationality of his actions and detect the deeper intention. He did not know for sure, until the entire planet erupted in a brilliance of electrical and chemical and radiant energy-fields, that they hadn't.

"You all know," the demon continued, "this event, since the entire perished population of that planet caused a housing crisis here in hell. But probably you have not, before now, tried to think through what led up to the event. In conclusion, I call your attention only to the fact that the man, in sabotaging the alien's human 'power-conduit,' created an uncontrollable factor which, at the time of the conjecture, led to a massive feedback and reaction, eventuating in the destruction of the entire planet, aliens as well. Again, note that this outcome, although it is *more just* in that it embroils the perpetrators of the evil in the consequences of their own action, has nonetheless brought on a numerically *greater* evil

than that which it sought retribution for. Due to the confusion of the last hours in the man's mind, no detection of his personal motive is possible. We cannot tell whether he spitefully accepted the greater evil, or whether he knew for certain at all what the real outcome would be. In a sense that would be beside my point, even if we did understand this man's intentions. I want only to demonstrate the *indeterminacy* of moral concepts among human beings, the damnable power of interpretation that they have, which continually interferes with our own desire to make them feel that their punishment is indeed punishment, since of course their suffering is diminished when they do not get the point that this suffering is *meant* for them and is *meant* to be insufferable. They tend to take the edge off the suffering when they do not see that it will be interminable. It is in the light of all this that I have fallen to dereliction of duty, to dreaming and conception of things moral. I can only request your clemency for this inexcus-



able failure."

After the jury had silently filed out, the little demon took to remembering his grand dream, the recapitulation of a civilization. Only the re-entry of the jury, some hours later, awoke him.

"Nabden Profratica," the foreman addressed him. He arose to face his sentence. But the foreman digressed. "Lest the defendant misunderstand our verdict, we have decided to depart from custom and explain the verdict beforehand. Old Professor Prosthcodgides has argued, very eloquently, that quite the contrary of what the defendant has claimed, mere suffering, not understood by the sufferer, is *not* diminished by its not being understood. He finds your attitude undemonic in the extreme, in that there is a *reason* why no other demons have speculated about the history of hell's patients: to

think about their history is to think about the reasons for their suffering, and that is the same as understanding why their suffering is *just*. But, he says, to consider suffering just is to *mitigate* its pain — it does not bite as much as it would if it were undeserved and arbitrary. He finds your position, therefore, to be directly wrong and subversive."

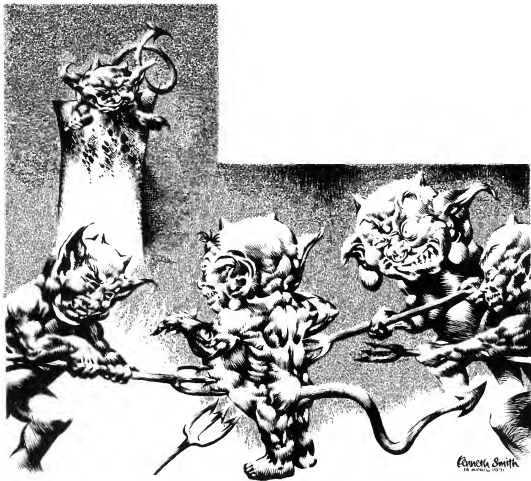
The demon started to break out in a green sweat, but he was relieved, for an instant, as the foreman continued.

"I report this *minority* opinion on the jury for your edification. The rest of us jurors have found no merit in *either* of the two opposed positions. In fact we haven't understood a damn thing that was said since this trial began, although we did enjoy the color movies and particularly the big holocaust at the end. The majority opinion of the jury is that you

are guilty of being boring and obscure. Although it isn't undemonic of *you* to be this way, since this method of psychological torture is as valid as any other, still it is quite demonic of us to be irritated with it."

The judge coiled his forked tail in salacious anticipation and banged his gavel: "Seventy-two millennia of corporal punishment!" was the sentence.

Four guardian devils stepped forward and thrust their sharp-pointed tridents into Nabden Profratica's paunch.







DID JA' EVER WONDER WHAT TYPE OF PERSON CONCOCTS THESE BIZARRE ADVENTURES YOU READ HERE AND IN THE COMICS? WELL, THE FORTITUDE OF TOM SUTTON HAS! SO WE GIVE YOU...

THE COMIC BOOK FREAK!

(... AND YOU CAN HAVE HIM.)

THE FORMATIVE YEARS OF THE COMIC BOOK FREAK ARE OF UPMOST IMPORTANCE AS THEY FORM THE FOUNDATION FOR AN AMAZING LIFE STYLE!

LOOK!
IT'S A BIRD!
IT'S A PLANE!
IT'S ...

...IT'S JUST MY
CRAZY OL' BROTHER,
MELVIN MEDNIK,
JUMPIN' OFF THE
BARN ROOF AG IN!



MELVIN! STOP
READIN' THEM
DUMB COMIC BOOKS
AN' COME WATCH
TELEVISION!

AH! LET HIM ALONE
IT AIN'T HIS
FAULT HE'S
GOT NO TASTE
FER KULTURE!



JUST READING COMICS WASN'T ENOUGH...
MELVIN COMENCED TO MAKE HIS OWN!

YOUR WORK IS INDICATIVE OF A
PROMISING CAREER, MEDNIK--



A GOOD EDUCATION IS VERY IMPORTANT TO THE ASPIRING COMICS WRITER... AN EDUCATION IN **COMICS** THAT IS...



DAWNS THE GREAT DAY WHEN ARMED WITH THE ADDRESSES FROM THE INSIDE COVERS OF HIS COMIC BOOKS, THE NOVICE LAYS SIEGE TO THE BIG CITY **PUBLISHERS!**



SOON, HOWEVER, OUR LITERARY LUMINARY FINDS A PLACE FOR HIMSELF AMONG THE GUIDING LIGHTS OF **COMICDOM...**



DAWNS THE SECOND GREAT DAY! OUR SHOOK-UP SHAKESPEARE GETS HIS OWN MAG TO WRITE!



NOTHING SUCCEEDS LIKE A MEDNIK FACING A DEAD-LINE, SO IN NO TIME AT ALL...



C'MON MEDNIK! ONLY A FEW MORE AND YOUR FIFTEEN BOOKS FOR THIS MONTH WILL BE FINISHED!



THE END? YOU GOTTA BE KIDDIN'!

YESTERDAY'S RAIN!!

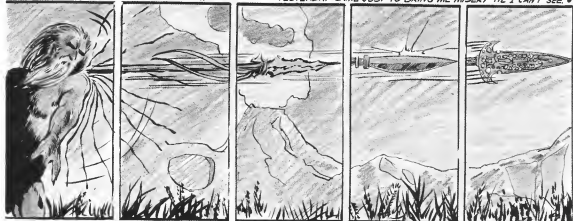
YESTERDAY'S RAIN BRINGS TOMORROW'S
PAINS FALLING 'ROUND MY HEAD
THOSE FEELINGS I DREAD...
LOVE HAS LOST,





YOU'LL PAY THE COST OF A BROKEN DREAM,
AND STILL IT SEEMS I CAN'T GET OUT FROM UNDER
MY CLOUD AND SEE THE LIGHT OF DAY.

YESTERDAY'S RAIN FALLS AGAIN AND AGAIN, AND MAKES
ME FEEL THE WORLD'S NOT REAL.
YESTERDAY CAME JUST TO BRING ME MISERY 'TIL I CAN'T SEE.



RUNNING THROUGH THE TREES, MY HANDS ABOVE MY HEAD,
TRYING TO ESCAPE THE RAIN.
YESTERDAY'S RAIN BRINGS TOMORROW'S PAIN FALLING 'ROUND MY HEAD.

THE FREEDOMS ARE DEAD.
YOU'LL PAY THE COSTS.
YESTERDAY'S RAIN FALLS AGAIN AND AGAIN...



Stray Shot in Drug Raid Kills Father Holding Infant

BANKAMERICAN



OVER MY HEAD THE DARKNESS SPREAD 'TIL MORNING LIGHT THAT
BREAKS IN THE NIGHT COMES DOWN AROUND ME,
TEARS FALLING LIKE THE BIRTH OF RAIN SPINNING TO THE GROUND...

HEARING NOT A SOUND,
THOUGHTS INSIDE MY HEAD GOING 'ROUND AND 'ROUND,
FRIENDS ALL AROUND ME AND I'M STILL ALL ALONE.





AND YESTERDAY'S RAIN FELL ALL THAT NIGHT AND INTO NO TOMORROW...



foxy
12/69



DRAGON SLAYERS

THE WAY HAD BEEN LONG AND HARSH-- AND THE SILVER-MANED BARBARIAN WHO WAS **KALVIN THE BOLD** HAD GROWN TIRED OF THE QUEST. THE FOREST THAT NOW FORMED A CANOPY ABOVE HIS HEAD WAS MADE OF QUIETER STUFF-- AND HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR THE SOFT MOANING HE HEARD DRIFTING THRU THE TREES, HE MIGHT WELL HAVE FOUND HIS WAY HOME -- IN **PEACE...**

HOLD, **FERRET**--YOU INCORRIGIBLE NAG--YOUR MASTER WOULD SEEK THE CAUSE OF YONDER SOUND!

HO! AND WHAT HAVE WE HERE? A PAIR OF **COMELIER WENCHES** THESE WEARY EYES HAVE NOT SEEN FOR A GOODYLY SPELL!

GREETINGS, FAIR MAIDS! WHAT DO YOU HERE IN THIS MISBEGOTTEN WILDERNESS?

FORCING HIS WAY THRU THE TANGLED UNDERBRUSH, **KALVIN** BURST INTO THE PERIMETERS OF A SMALL CLEARING, WHERE HE DISCOVERS...

I PRAY THEE, BRAVE WARRIOR... **SAVE US!** OUR PEOPLE HAVE LEFT US HERE IN **SACRIFICE** TO THE FIERCE **DRAGON** WHO DOTHS TERRORIZE OUR VILLAGE!

AYE NOBLE SIR! IF YOU DOTHS NOT RESCUE US SOON, 'T WILL BE **TOO LATE!**

THE **DRAGON** RETURNS WITH HASTE!

AH--SO IT DOES! BUT IT RETURNS FOR NAUGHT BUT **DEATH!**

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IT LUMBERS FORWARD SLOWLY, THIS GHASTLY BEHEMOTH FROM A TIME LONG DEAD-- IT CRUSHES THE SOFT EARTH FLAT BENEATH ITS TALONED TREAD AND TURNS ITS GRIME-ENCRUSTED HEAD TO STUDY THE PUNY LITTLE CREATURE THAT OPPOSES IT...



HAH, DRAGON... YOU'D NEEDS MOVE FAR SWIFTER THAN THAT TO SINK YOUR FOUL TEETH INTO **KALVIN THE BOLD!**



I SHALL MAKE THIS SWIFT, MONSTER... THERE ARE TWO FAIR MAIDS YONDER WHO AWAIT MY PLEASURE!

FAREWELL, DRAGON-- ENJOY YOUR STAY IN HELL!



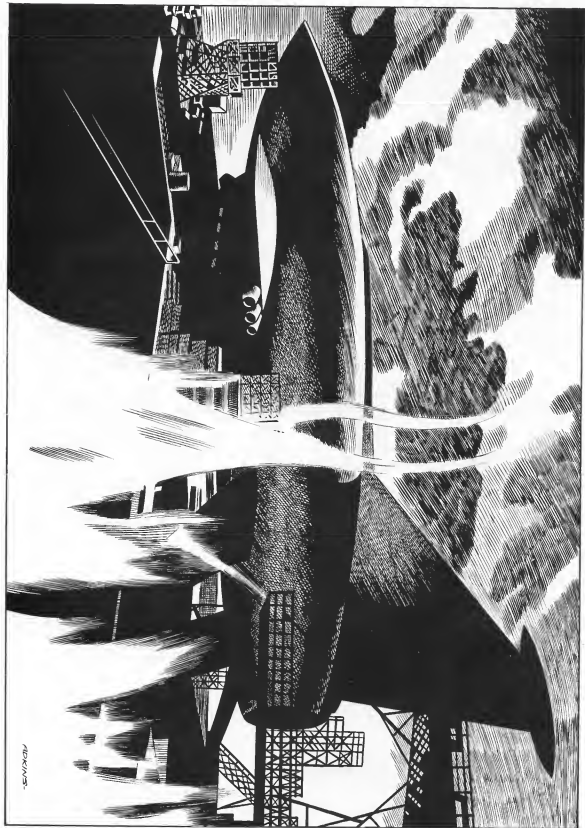
WHTHRRROOSH

THE DIAMOND-SHAPED SKULL COMPLETES ITS TURN AT LAST... AND THE SWEET AIR IS RENT WITH THE SICKENING SMELL OF CHARRED AND BURNING FLESH...

THE PONDEROUS DRAGON DOES NOT EVEN PAUSE AS IT TURNS TO THE TWO YOUNG FEMALES WHOSE SCREAMS SLICE LIKE SWORD-BLADES THRU THE FOREST AIR...

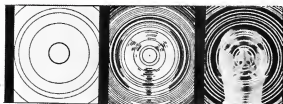


AND **KALVIN THE BOLD** JOINS THE **OTHER** CHARRED PATCHES IN THE LUSH GREEN CLEARING...





A VIEW FROM WITHOUT....



KALEN TO RFPKKK/WWW/WWW
 "KLK" READJUSTMENT COMPLETE... SUBSIDIARY REPORT NO. 3645666... SUBJECT EARTH... COORDINATES FOLLOW... PURPOSE... DETAIL STUDY... ASSIGNMENT C-QUOTIENT TESTING... PROSPECT RATING... QUESTIONABLE TO UNDESIRABLE... GENERAL PURPOSE... TO PROVIDE COMPLETE REPORT TO I. F. O. C. P. FOR CONSIDERATION. SPECIFIC PURPOSE: UNKNOWN TO FIELD PERSONEL - FOR THE PURPOSE OF ACQUIRING AN UNBIASED VIEW. DETAIL REPORT FOLLOWS.



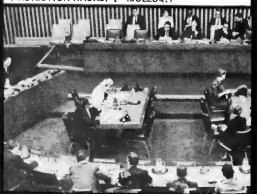
BACKGROUND DATA
 A. EXTREME VIEW OF (1) TERRITORIALITY AND (2) SPHERES OF INFLUENCE GUIDE ALL POLITICAL, PERSONAL AND RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS. PERSONAL

EGO PLAYS LITTLE PART IN CONFLICT EXCEPT WHEN IT INVOLVES (1) AND (2). PERSONAL HONOR NO LONGER SEEMS TO HOLD SWAY IN DECISION MAKING (REINFORCING RYCRIMNOOS "STRUCTURE OF ALIEN CULTURE" THEORY. ACCORDING TO THE THEORY THIS CHANGE COULD BE EITHER GOOD OR BAD.)



B. ADVANCES IN COMMUNICATIONS MAKE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR A POWERFUL NATION TO DOMINATE ACQUIRED TERRITORY WITHOUT MAKING SOME SORT OF EXCUSE OR ALIBI. (COLLOQ.)

EXAMPLE: ONE LARGE COUNTRY (A) PROTECTS A SMALLER COUNTRY (B) FROM A THIRD COUNTRY (C). MEANWHILE COUNTRY (A) DOESN'T PAY IMPORT TAXES IN COUNTRY (B) AND GETS FIRST CRACK AT ITS EXPORTS. (SOMETIMES CALLED THE "PROTECTION RACKET". (COLLOQ.)





C. IN THE CASE OF VIETNAM, A LARGE COUNTRY (A CONFEDERATED UNION OF STATES CALLED SIMPLY, THE UNITED STATES) MANY HUNDREDS OF MILES AWAY, HAS PROVIDED MILITARY ARMAMENT AND MANPOWER TO ASSIST THE

'RECOGNISED' GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH VIETNAM IN A WAR AGAINST A REBEL UPRISING WHICH IS SUPPORTED BY NORTH VIETNAM (NORTH AND SOUTH ONCE BEEN UNITED).



D. TO DEFEND ITS POSITION THE LARGE COUNTRY PRESENTS TWO POSITIONS. (1) AT HOME IT INSISTS THAT THE VIETNAMESE MUST BE PROTECTED FROM THE GODLESS (?COMMUNISTS. (2) TO A LESS PAROCHIAL WORLD IT INSISTS

THAT SOUTH VIETNAM WAS ATTACKED BY NORTH VIETNAM AND BY TREATY THIS COUNTRY WAS ASKED TO STEP IN. (CURIOUSLY ENOUGH ALL OF THE FIGHTING SEEMS TO BE TAKING PLACE IN THE SOUTH. IN SUPPORT OF THE REBELLION THEORY.)



E. A LARGE NUMBER OF CITIZENS OF THIS UNITED STATES APPARENTLY FIND DIFFICULTY IN JUSTIFYING THIS WAR. PERHAPS WORLD COMMUNICATIONS IS HAVING SOME EFFECT IN STOPPING

THIS WAR. (THIS SUBJECT COVERED IN LENGTH IN ADDENDUM REPORT.) VARIOUS INDIVIDUALS IN THIS UNITED STATES DEPEND ON THIS WAR FOR THEIR PROFITS. CURIOUSLY ENOUGH, THEY ARE THE ONES WHO SCREAM LOUDEST ABOUT 'GODLESS' COMMUNISTS. (IN AN ENLIGHTENED SOCIETY WE REALIZE THAT IT IS ADVISABLE TO CUT DOWN ON PROFITS AND THAT THE OPTIMUM IS TO GIVE MORE THAN WE RECEIVE.)



THIS BACKGROUND DATA WAS SUPPLIED SO AS TO MAKE CLEAR PORTIONS OF WHAT YOU ARE ABOUT TO SEE... THE LOCATION OF THE VILLAGE OF ONE NAI-BINH-CHU GEOGRAPHICALLY IS UNIMPORTANT EXCEPT

TO SAY THAT IT IS SITUATED IN A NEUTRAL ZONE BETWEEN THE TWO WARRING FACTIONS.





THE FAMILY OF NAI-BINH-CHU IS COMMITTING A FAIRWELL RITUAL TYPICAL TO THE PLANET. THE YOUNGEST SON, HAI DING, PLAYFULLY GRABS AT HIS FATHER'S NOSE.



HIS WIFE JOKES AT HOW LARGE HER HUSBAND'S NOSE IS, THAT IT SHOULD ATTRACT THEIR SON'S PLAYFUL ATTENTION, "LIKE AN AMERICAN'S", SHE SAYS.



EVEN AN OUTWORLDER CAN SENSE THE UNDERLYING SADNESS OF CHU'S FAIRWELL. ONE SIDE OR THE OTHER HAS CONVINCED HIM THAT THEIR CAUSE IS JUST.



IN CHU'S CASE IT WAS THE VIET CONG, AND ON THIS DAY HIS JOB IS TO AMBUSH AN ENEMY PATROL. IT IS DOUBTFUL WHETHER HE REALLY KNOWS WHY HE'S FIGHTING.



BUT FIGHT HE DOES AND POORLY THIS DAY. PERHAPS BECAUSE THE AMERICANS ARE SO WELL TRAINED. PERHAPS BECAUSE HIS THOUGHTS ARE OF HIS SON, HAI.



IF SO, IT WAS A TRAGIC THOUGHT, FOR THE NOSE HIS SON SO GLEEFULLY GRASPED MOMENTS BEFORE HAS BEEN SHATTERED AND SPLINTERED BEYOND RECOGNITION BY A STEEL-JACKETED PROJECTILE.





THE AMERICAN SOLDIER WHO
ENDED CHU'S LIFE HAS
PAUSED. I READ REGRET AND
REVULSION ON HIS FACE.



WHILE BACK AT CHU'S
VILLAGE NAKED FEAR SHOWS
THE FEATURES OF ITS PEOPLE.
THE DRONE OF AIRCRAFT SO
LONG FAMILIAR IS NOW OMI-
NIOUSLY CLOSE.



AND WITH THIS CALLOUS, USE-
LESS WARNING THE BOMBS
AND ROCKETS HURL THEM-
SELVES UPON THE SOFT FLESH
AND TINDERBOX HOMES OF
THIS SMALL VILLAGE, THE
HOME OF THE NOW DEAD NAI-

BINH-CHU IS STRUCK FIRST!



AN ADMIXTURE CALLED
NAPALM HAS ENDED THE LIVES
OF CHU'S FAMILY EXCEPT HIS
WIFE WHO TAKES A FINAL
BREATH OF LIVING FIRE AS
SHE HURLS A SMALL PRE-
CIOUS PACKAGE FROM THE
HUT.





THE SMOLDERING "PACKAGE"
BOUNCES AND ROLLS TO A
STOP. SO RESILIENT ARE
HUMAN BABIES WITH LAYERS
OF FAT AND FLEXIBLE BONES...



HAVING FEW DESIRES, WANT-
ING ONLY FOOD AND THE EN-
FOLDING PROTECTING WARMTH
OF ITS MOTHER.



SO.....HE CRIES....AND HIS
CRIES ARE LOST IN THE
SCREAMS, EXPLOSIONS, DEATH
CRIES AND MOANS OF A HUN-
DRED OTHER VICTIMS.



HIS TEARS BURN HIS EYES,
AS HE SEEKS TO WIPE THEM
AWAY A SMALL PART OF HIS
PAINED SENSES WONDER
WHY THE FUTILE RUBBING
PAINS HIM ALL THE MORE.



NEARLY BLINDED BY THE
CAUTERIZED FLESH OF HIS
ARM, HE STRUGGLES UPWARD...



A WOMAN WITH AN ALREADY
DEAD CHILD RUSHES BY AND
KNOCKS HIM OVER.... IF
ONLY SHE KNEW.....
PERHAPS SHE WOULD PAUSE...





THE INITIAL SHOCK MUST HAVE WORN OFF BY THIS POINT. HAI SHRIEKS ALL THE LOUDER IN CONFUSION AND PAIN. OVER AND OVER HE CALLS FOR HIS MOTHER.



ONCE AGAIN HE STRUGGLES UP BUT SHRIEKS NOW EACH TIME HE TOUCHES ANYTHING WITH HIS RIGHT ARM.



HE WALKS....NO, STUMBLES... IN THE SMOKE...THE RUBBLE, HE SEEMS TO BE LOOKING FOR... ANYTHING...ANYTHING FAMILIAR...ANYONE...WHO WILL...HOLD HIM...WARM HIM...COMFORT HIM.



BUT SINCE HAI IS JUST A BABY...HE... DOESN'T RECOGNIZE THE DRAINAGE DITCH. SINCE HE'S A BABY...HIS COORDINATION ISN'T DEVELOPED ENOUGH TO STOP HIS MUTILATED BODY FROM

PLUNGING HEADLONG INTO THE ONLY SEWERAGE SYSTEM HIS VILLAGE HAS.





SINCE HE'S A BABY, AND
SINCE HE'S AT WAR, AND
SINCE HE'S A THREAT TO ALL
BRAVE MEN WHO LOVE FREE-
DOM EVERYWHERE... HE TUM-
BLES UNNOTICED INTO TEN
INCHES OF WATER.



I HAVE EDITED THE RECORD
HERE AS YOU MIGHT HAVE
NOTICED. IT TOOK A FULL TWO
MINUTES FOR THE BABY TO
DROWN IN THOSE.... TEN....
INCHES OF WATER..... AH...
EXCUSE ME....END OF REPORT"

CLICK



Greetings:



THANKS —

Billy Graham, for creating the title *Phase*.

Ken Barr, for designing the logo.

Ralph Abrahams, for about a ton of production advice.

Tony De Zuniga, for those great drawings we're using for ads and such nonsense.

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Jean Izzo, for lettering *Yesterday's Rain*, *Dragon Slayer*, *Soul Food*, and *Comes the Grey Dawn*.

Cory Adams, for lettering *A View from Without*.

And a special thanks to the following people for their help in publicizing *Phase 1*:

Bill Black, Lamar Blaylock, Joe Brancatelli, Gary Brown, Bob Cosgrove, Mark Feldman, Mark Frank, Bob Gerstenhaber, Marty Greim, Gary Groth, Bob Gustaveson, Scott Harris, Larry Herndon, Alan Light, John McLaughlin, Neal Pozner, Phil Seuling, Kenneth Smith, Greg Theakston, Mark Wheatley and Bill G. Wilson — and we'd appreciate it if you'd support their efforts.



SCHEDULE OF PUBLICATION — *Phase* will appear at the very end of each year; and to keep us busy for the rest of the year we'll be publishing numerous other surprises — far too many to list.

So keep your eyes open and your wallet ready!

CONTRIBUTIONS — We'd really like to see your stuff but, before you send anything — take a good look at what's in here; then, if you decide you could put a few of 'em outta business — accompany all manuscripts or art with a stamped self-addressed envelope; or preferably, send stats or Xerox copies which do not need to be returned.

CORRESPONDENCE — We'd appreciate any comments on this issue and suggestions for our future projects; if you wish to be answered, you must enclose an S.S.A.E.

All Contributions and Correspondence to be sent to *Phase*, P.O. Box 218, Vanderveer Station, Brooklyn, New York 11210.

FALSE ADVERTISING DEPT. — What ever happened to that previously announced cover by the one and only Jim Steranko? We decided against it.

How come?

Because it was a western, and as such would've been too misleading a cover topic for an *anything goes* mag like *Phase*. Also, we thought it too dark and dull-toned to be reproduced as an exterior of striking brilliance.

So, for these reasons, in spite of Mr. Steranko's benevolent gesture, we chose Ken Barr as our cover artist and hopefully, you'll enjoy his delineation as much as we did.

HEY LOOK — If you want to see an enlarged reprint of *Comes the Grey Dawn*, well it's in *Monster Times*, by permission of *Phase*.



phase 1



LESTER FREAMON

